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ABSTRACT

The Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) at Mississippi State University fosters innovative approaches to sustainable rural development and builds collaborative networks among agencies, institutions, and communities. The center's key goals are to: 1) strengthen and support the capacity of Southern land-grant institutions and their partners to conduct rural development research and outreach education; 2) enhance the economic, environmental, and social well-being of rural communities; 3) strengthen the human capital of the region's rural communities; 4) improve rural Southerners' access to community services; and 5) enhance the capacity of rural communities to carry out their expanded responsibilities in the design, management, and financing of government programs. This report briefly describes the activities the SRDC has undertaken from October 1999 to September 2000: research in which the SRDC has been involved, extension education workshops and conferences the center has sponsored, publications it has produced, and efforts undertaken to support the rural development efforts of southern land-grant faculty. The nature and extent of extramural funding secured by the SRDC in support of its priority goals are outlined. A synopsis of activities carried out by the SRDC in support of the center's five priority goals is presented. Partners, board members, technical advisory committee members, staff, presentations, and conferences and meetings attended are listed. (TD)

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ED 449 954

1999 2000

Year in Review

Southern Rural Development Center

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SRDC

SOUTHERN RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

RC022817

From the Director

The Southern Rural Development Center continues to break new ground in terms of the work that it has carried out in partnership with our Southern land-grant university system and other key rural development entities. We remain excited about the number of county Extension agents in the region who have participated in our Southern Region Community Development Institute. This Institute, coupled with the many workshops and conferences that we have organized over the past year, is demonstrative of the Center's commitment to keeping the region's land-grant faculty attuned to the current and emerging rural development issues impacting our region.

The 1999-2000 period also has proved to be a banner year for the SRDC in terms of its publication activities. In particular, our new policy series on the rural South has received high marks by a number of our customers both within and outside the land-grant system. The decision to further expand and enhance the quality of our website has also been applauded. The number of persons accessing our website has risen from approximately 400 hits a month some two years ago, to nearly 25,000 a month today. We hope to continue our commitment to making our website a critical conduit for getting high quality information in the hands of Southern land-grant university faculty and others involved in rural development work.

The SRDC remains committed to initiating and investing in high quality research. For example, the food assistance research small grants program the Center has implemented in partnership with the Economic Research Service, is expanding the pool of 1862 and 1890 faculty involved in food insecurity and hunger research in the South. Many recipients of our grants are successfully capturing additional funds to further advance the work they have undertaken as a result of SRDC seed funds. My hope is the SRDC will be able to expand its investments in research addressing other vital rural development issues in the region.

Of course, the achievements the SRDC has realized over the past year are linked to a number of factors. First, the Center has been blessed with leaders and faculty in the South's land-grant system who are genuine in their belief and support for the work of the SRDC. Second, the membership of the SRDC's Board of Directors and Technical Advisory Committee has provided invaluable assistance in guiding the work of the Center. Third, many rural development partners outside the land-grant system have invested extramural funds in the SRDC as a means of further advancing its work. And finally, the SRDC professional and support staff have always shown a willingness to go the extra mile to ensure that we were effectively responding to the needs of our land-grant system and non-land-grant system partners. To them (Bonnie Teater, Sandy Payne, Denise Cosper, Lynn Reinschmiedt, Melissa Barfield, Kathy Stone and Emily Elliot) I offer my sincere appreciation for a job well done.

We hope you find the following report informative. As always, we welcome your comments and input regarding the work of the Southern Rural Development Center.

Sincerely,

Bo Beaulieu

Lionel J. (Bo) Beaulieu
Director

Introduction

Over the past three years, the Southern Rural Development Center has focused its efforts on five priority goals. These key goals are:

Priority 1: Strengthen and support the capacity of Southern land-grant institutions and their partners to conduct rural development research and outreach education programming.

State and county-level land-grant faculty are a vital part of the work of the Southern Rural Development Center. In order to promote sound rural development efforts in the region, the SRDC seeks to advance the knowledge and skills that land-grant faculty possess with regard to critical rural development issues in the region.

Priority 2: Enhance the economic, environmental and social well-being of rural communities and people.

The rural South is a rich haven of natural resources and environmental beauty, but it is facing many hardships in its capacity to realize a proper balance in its pursuit of a vibrant economy, social progress and a sound environment. The well-being of the rural South can be further advanced through the active engagement of the Southern land-grant universities, along with its public and private sector partners, in addressing the economic, environmental and social challenges impacting rural people and communities of the region.

Priority 3: Strengthen the human capital resources of the region's rural communities.

The educational status of the rural South's population has improved significantly over the course of the 1990s. However, the technological changes occurring in the workplace, coupled with the emergence of a global economy, suggest that the future well-being of the South's rural population and places will be linked to the quality of its workforce. As such, efforts to build and strengthen the human capital resources of the rural South is of paramount importance. Over the past year, the SRDC has actively pursued a number of activities to promote the human capital development of the region's adults and youth.

Priority 4: Improve rural Southerners' access to vital community services.

The limited economic and fiscal resources available in many rural communities have presented major challenges to local leaders as they seek to provide important community services to their citizens. While most rural areas seek to expand job and income opportunities for their residents, the capacity to do so is often impeded by the lack of quality local services available to complement the economic development activities of these localities. Quality water and waste management systems and access to decent health care constitute vital services that make rural areas attractive places in which to live and work.

Priority 5: Enhance the capacity of rural people and communities to carry out their expanded responsibilities in the design, management and financing of government programs.

The federal government continues to support legislation that provides local jurisdictions with a greater voice in deciding matters that were once the purview of the federal government. The shift to local engagement presents both opportunities and challenges for rural localities and their residents. It has been the intent of the SRDC to advance quality research and outreach education programs that address the impact of federal devolutionary policy on the rural people and communities of the South.

The following report highlights the variety of activities that the Southern Rural Development Center has undertaken over the course of the October 1999 – September 2000 time period. It showcases the research in which the SRDC has been involved, the Extension education workshops and conferences that the Center has sponsored, the variety of publications it has produced, and the efforts it has undertaken to support the rural development efforts of our land-grant faculty. Next, the nature and extent of extramural funding secured by the SRDC in support of its priority goals is outlined. And finally, a synopsis of activities carried out by the SRDC in support of the Center's five priority goals is presented.

Institutions Served

Alabama
- Alabama A&M University
- Auburn University
- Tuskegee University

Arkansas
- University of Arkansas
- University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff

Florida
- Florida A&M University
- University of Florida

Georgia
- Fort Valley State University
- University of Georgia

Kentucky
- Kentucky State University
- University of Kentucky

Louisiana
- Louisiana State University
- Southern University

Mississippi
- Alcorn State University
- Mississippi State University

North Carolina
- North Carolina A&T State University
- North Carolina State University

Oklahoma
- Langston University
- Oklahoma State University

Puerto Rico
- University of Puerto Rico

South Carolina
- Clemson University
- South Carolina State University

Tennessee
- Tennessee State University
- University of Tennessee

Texas
- Prairie View A&M University
- Texas A& M University

The Virgin Islands
- University of the Virgin Islands

Virginia
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
- Virginia State University

General Support to Land-Grant Faculty and Administrators

BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION. The Center is facilitating discussions among regional faculty to pursue efforts regarding Extension's role in business retention and expansion. A team of faculty is focusing on identifying BR&E specialists and resources across the region and convening a meeting of these specialists to develop regional strategies such as reviewing existing materials, expanding current curricula, and providing coordinated regional training.

ECOP-PROGRAM LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE: The SRDC director represented the regional rural development centers on this national committee. The committee played a central role in monitoring the base program activities of the Extension system and in evaluating proposals for implementation of new national initiatives

FAMILIES FIRST EVALUATION PROJECT. SRDC staff has been working with six 1890 institutional programs to design a series of evaluation instruments for use in their Families First Nutrition Education and Wellness Research Initiative. In addition, the SRDC has designed and provided training to Families First land-grant staff on the data-management system for use in tracking the impact of the Families First program on participants and their families. The Families First project seeks to educate people in rural areas about better nutrition and food safety, incorporating a traditional diet with healthier choices.

GRANT CONNECTIONS. This electronic newsletter provides information about grant opportunities available to land-grant faculty in the region and is disseminated to members of the Southern Rural Development Consortium. The newsletter also is available on the SRDC website. The newsletter highlighted 42 grant opportunities in the four newsletters published during the year.

NATIONAL CHILDCARE INITIATIVE. The SRDC director is part of the CSREES national initiative to improve childcare by linking USDA, land-grant universities and county Extension offices to local communities across the country. The major goal of the initiative is to increase the quality, affordability, accessibility, availability and sustainability of childcare, after-school and teen programs in communities across the U.S. The SRDC director is part of the evaluation team that is designing a framework to measure the impact of the Extension childcare initiative on its targeted audiences.

NATIONAL NETWORK FOR HEALTH. The Center's assistant to the director, is serving as part of the Consumer and Community Health Policy Work Group of the National Network for Health (NNH). Currently, the SRDC has received funds from NNH to work with SERA–IEG 19 to produce a health video at Mississippi State University.

e-commerce

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL E-COMMERCE TASK FORCES. The four Regional Rural Development Centers are leading a national effort to address e-business research and outreach opportunities within the land-grant system. The 21-person national task force, with a portion of the members drawn from the Southern region, is currently developing a blueprint to expand the Extension education and research agendas of our land-grant faculty in the e-business arena. This includes an assessment of the current educational curricula available in this subject matter area, identification of gaps in existing curricula, the present state of research on e-business, and needed research that could document the impact of e-business on various community sectors (i.e., farmers, main street businesses, local governments).

In addition, the SRDC established a regional e-business task force to work in concert with the national committee. Some 19 individuals in the region attended an SRDC sponsored planning meeting to discuss the emerging importance of e-business and to determine the appropriate role. The committee is providing input to the national task force on needed Extension curricula, research and training activities to enhance the land-grant systems' work in the e-business area. The committee is also involved with the SRDC in developing a research forum that will be part of the SERA-IEG 16 annual meeting to be held February 2001 (in conjunction with the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists conference in Fort Worth, TX). The major topic of the SERA-IEG 16 meeting will be e-business.

NATIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE: Members of this national committee, including the SRDC director, have been involved in organizing a national workshop that is designed to increase Extension's capacity to

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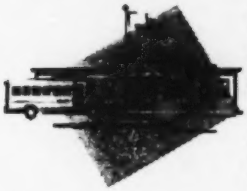
work with community partners in addressing workforce preparation and investment activities. The workshop, held in Denver, CO, September 11-14, 2000, was titled Building Workforce Assets for Quality Communities. The SRDC director presented a workshop at this national conference addressing tools and techniques for assessing community assets.



PROMOTING PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS OF THE SOUTH'S RURAL SCHOOL SYSTEM. Many rural schools today are in poor physical condition. Because of the limited resources available in several rural school districts, few find themselves able to undertake major improvements in the physical infrastructure of their schools. In partnership with the Organizations Concerned About Rural Education (OCRE), the SRDC organized a meeting of Extension faculty, USDA Rural Development representatives, State Departments of Education, and private sector firms from four states (Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Texas) in December 1999. The purpose of the meeting was to explore the role that a new funding stream available to schools – Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZABs) – might play in helping upgrade the quality of school facilities. QZABs represent a new interest free financial resource that public schools (with 35 percent of the student population who qualify for free or reduced lunch) can tap to rehabilitate public school facilities or to expand needed equipment. As an outcome of this meeting, participating states are working to inform rural public school districts within their respective states of the availability of these bonds for use in improving existing school facilities.

S-296 RURAL LABOR MARKETS: WORKERS, FIRMS AND COMMUNITIES IN TRANSITION MULTI-STATE RESEARCH PROJECT. A new multi-state research project that addresses rural labor force issues in the rural South was approved by the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors in the Spring of 2000. The SRDC played an instrumental role in helping bring this multi-state effort to fruition by writing a preliminary draft of the multi-state research plan and tapping a team of land-grant researchers in the South having interest in this research topic.

S-298 ASSESSING IMPACTS OF WELFARE REFORM ON INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING IN THE RURAL SOUTH. Nearly two years ago, the SRDC assembled a team of faculty across the South for the purpose of exploring the research and Extension program needs associated with the new welfare reform legislation passed by Congress in 1996. Because of the South's heavy reliance on the public assistance program, there was considerable concern that rural families and communities would be significantly impacted by this legislation. As an outcome of this initial meeting, a critical mass of research faculty began to pursue the establishment of a multi-state research effort that would help facilitate scientifically sound research on the consequences of welfare reform on welfare participants, their families, and their communities in the South. The research team successfully secured approval of their multi-state research project by the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors in September of 2000.

SOUTHERN EXTENSION AND RESEARCH ACTIVITY, INFORMATION EXCHANGE GROUP (SERA-IEG 16)—RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE. This group offers a forum for researchers and Extension personnel to exchange information on rural infrastructure issues and discuss how Extension and research can best address these issues. During the past year, the SRDC helped organize a special session at the 2000 Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists meeting in Lexington, KY, that addressed the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA). The WIA legislation promotes local involvement in designing workforce investment strategies that address the unique labor needs of their communities.

SOUTHERN EXTENSION AND RESEARCH ACTIVITY, INFORMATION EXCHANGE GROUP (SERA-IEG 19)—RURAL HEALTH. The SRDC collaborates with this regional committee to build public-private coalitions for health education and research. The committee exchanges information on the status of new research findings and Extension programs related to rural health and safety issues to help members gain a regional perspective on current rural health problems and to formulate joint activities of mutual benefit. This past year, the Center facilitated two meetings of the group.

SOUTHERN REGION PROGRAM LEADERS COMMITTEE (PLC). In 1991, Extension directors and administrators formed the Southern Region Program Leaders Committee with representatives from 1862 and 1890 institutions in each of the four program areas: agriculture and natural resources, community development, family and consumer sciences, and 4-H youth development. Other areas critical to the work of the region's Extension system were established as well, namely, communications and information technology, program and staff development, and middle management. Since the inception of the Southern PLC, the SRDC has managed and coordinated the administrative activities of this organization.

This includes overseeing the annual meeting of the PLC, providing conference planning support to the seven program committees that are part of the structure of the PLC, and facilitating communication among and across the seven PLC groups. In addition to carrying out these responsibilities, the SRDC has created and maintained a Southern PLC website over the past year that has helped provide a central repository for the current and historical activities of the PLC. The website address is http://www.ext.msstate.edu/srdc/plcsite/index.html. The Association of Southern Region Extension Directors and 1890 Extension Administrators have provided the SRDC with funds to support its work on behalf of the Southern PLC.

Visit the SRDC website at http://ext.msstate.edu/srdc.

SOUTHERN RURAL DEVELOPMENT CONSORTIUM. The SRDC has for the past three years spearheaded an effort to identify land-grant faculty in the South having an active interest in rural development. The SRDC has sought to maintain regular, on-going communication with these individuals. This group has been asked to provide on-going input to the SRDC regarding its activities. At the same time, the SRDC has utilized this important channel of communication to keep land-grant faculty in the South aware of various rural development initiatives and opportunities being undertaken in the South and beyond. During the year, the number of who have joined the Southern Rural Development Consortium has expanded to 412 persons.

SRDC WEBSITE EXPANSION. The SRDC undertook a complete revamping of its website during the 1999-2000 period. The new design is more user friendly and offers users a keyword search engine for accessing information on a variety of rural development issues. Greater access to SRDC publications is now available to users in an electronic format, as are a listing of curricula and research products available through the South's land-grant system including nine major rural development topics (such as community economic development, community planning and leadership development). The website revisions have accelerated the number of hits it has received on a monthly basis. In recent months, the SRDC website has averaged over 20,000 hits a month, a rate that is 50 times higher than that experienced just two years ago.

Research Initiated by the SRDC

ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES: A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO WELFARE REFORM AND JOB RETENTION: A MULTI-SITE ASSESSMENT. With funding from Emory University, an SRDC research team undertook in-depth field research to determine how welfare recipients in a rural Mississippi county (that is, those receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families benefits) were managing as a result of welfare reform legislation. The study examined: the physical location of TANF recipients, the type of jobs available to these individuals at the local level, the degree to which key support services (such as child care and transportation) were accessible to welfare participants, and the degree to which community-wide coordination was being undertaken to place TANF recipients into the local workforce. The Mississippi study is part of a larger research effort whose purpose is to document the specific welfare-to-work challenges facing welfare recipients both in urban and rural areas of the U.S.

HUMAN CAPITAL ENDOWMENTS AND LABOR FORCE EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG ADULTS IN THE SOUTH. With funding from the TVA Rural Studies Program at the University of Kentucky and the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, the SRDC undertook research to explore the link between human capital endowments of Southern workers and their labor force experiences over time. The SRDC research team studied nearly 5,000 individuals who were part of the National High School and Beyond study who graduated from high school in 1982, and traced their labor force experiences over the course of a 10-year period. The SRDC director and graduate research assistant submitted their final report to the TVA Rural Studies Program in June of 2000.

RURAL WELFARE-TO-WORK IN MISSISSIPPI: THE CHALLENGES OF URBAN INFLUENCE. With funding from the Administration of Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, SRDC staff, along with other Mississippi State University faculty, completed a pilot study addressing the differential impact of welfare reform across urban and rural areas of the state. Study results showed that selected areas of the state could experience great hardships because many who were moving off of welfare would be unable to find lower-skilled jobs in the area. The research team also designed and administered a survey to TANF clients that helped to more effectively document the host of skills and talents these individuals possessed that could be used to place them in jobs. Finally, a survey of local businesses in the study sites found that local employers were generally satisfied with the work performance of former TANF clients that they had hired in recent months. All three aspects of this research were intended to help assess how well welfare-to-work programs were working in urban and rural areas of Mississippi.

Research Investments Made by the SRDC

ADDRESSING THE FOOD ASSISTANCE NEEDS OF THE SOUTH'S VULNERABLE POPULATIONS. Since 1998, the SRDC has worked closely with the Economic Research Service in carrying out a small grants program designed to address the food assistance needs of the region's vulnerable populations, including those on public assistance, the working poor, the elderly, and the region's children. Over the past year, the SRDC has: (1) maintained the involvement of the SRDC Food Assistance Research Advisory Committee, a committee that helped determine the food assistance research issues that would be given priority attention in the FY 2000 small grant program; (2) prepared and distributed to institutions and faculty across the country the FY 2000 request for proposals; and (3) worked in concert with the Food Assistance Research Advisory Committee in the selection of the FY 2000 small grants awardees.

FOOD ASSISTANCE RESEARCH SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM. In an effort to highlight key findings of the six projects funded as part of the SRDC's FY 1998 Food Assistance Research Small Grants program, a report was prepared by Thomas Rowley on behalf of the SRDC. This report, published by the SRDC in August 2000, is available in hard copy and on the Center's website. Also available on the website are the six final reports submitted by the FY 1998 grantees.

The following is a listing of the FY 1999 small grants program awardees. Final reports on these projects are due to the SRDC in December 2000.

ACCESS TO AND USE OF NONPROFIT FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS BY VULNERABLE POPULATIONS IN SELECTED URBAN-RURAL AREAS IN THE SOUTH, *Robert Zabawa and Nyanza Duplessis, Tuskegee University; Earline Strickland, Alcorn State University; Odili Onianwa, Alabama A&M University; Mabel Dianna Edlow, Florida A&M University; Edith Neal, University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff; Fisseha Tegegne, Tennessee State University*

LINKED TANF AND FOOD STAMP PROGRAM PARTICIPATION DECISIONS: UNDERSTANDING THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT IMPACTS OF WELFARE REFORM, *Bradford Mills, Gautam Hazarika, and Everett B. Peterson, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University*

A COMPARISON OF FOOD AND NUTRIENT INTAKES, FOOD PURCHASE PATTERNS, LEVEL OF FOOD SECURITY AND SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AMONG FOOD STAMP PROGRAM RECIPIENTS AND NON-RECIPIENTS IN SOUTH CAROLINA, TENNESSEE, AND VIRGINIA, *Katherine Cason, Pennsylvania State University; Rama Radhakrishna, Clemson University; Janie Burney, Wayne Moore, Richard Poling, and Sandra Shivers, University of Tennessee; Ruby H. Cox, Judith L. Midkiff, and Kathleen Poole, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University*

CAN RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS SATISFY THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR JUSTICE? AN ASSESSMENT OF FAITH-BASED FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN RURAL MISSISSIPPI, *John P. Bartkowski, Helen A. Regis, and Neil R. White, Mississippi State University; Melinda N. Chow, University of Memphis*

FOOD STAMP UTILIZATION PATTERNS IN RURAL COUNTIES IN TEXAS: A MULTILEVEL ANALYSIS OF THE MICRO- AND MACRO-LEVEL DETERMINANTS OF CASELOAD DYNAMICS, *Steve H. Murdock, Tami Swenson, and Steve White, Texas A&M University*

NUTRIENT INTAKES OF FOOD INSUFFICIENT AND FOOD SUFFICIENT ADULTS IN THE SOUTHERN REGION OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE IMPACT OF FEDERAL FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, *Agnes W. Hinton, Carol L. Connell, and M. Kathleen Yadrick, The University of Southern Mississippi; L. Joseph Su, Louisiana State University Medical Center*

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Projects funded as part of the SRDC's FY 2000 Food Assistance Research Small Grants Program are:

ASSESSING FOOD SECURITY AND RELATED REFORM OUTCOMES IN TWO SOUTHERN STATES, *Pamela A. Monroe, and Carol E. O'Neil, Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station; Janet Marsh, Clemson University and the South Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station*

The purpose of this project is to advance our knowledge and understanding of food security issues as they relate to welfare reform in two Southern states. This will be accomplished through interviews with (primarily) former welfare reliant and working poor women in Louisiana and South Carolina. The investigators propose to enhance state and federal policymakers' knowledge of the continuing consequences (positive and negative) of Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) legislation by studying the respective states, sharing information across state lines, and observing patterns of similarities and differences in food security outcomes for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) families, former TANF families and local communities. Policymakers at the national level tend to view the Southern states as a cohesive, homogeneous region. However, this region is as diverse culturally as it is topographically. Funding of a collaborative project between researchers already working on these issues in South Carolina and Louisiana will highlight these differences, as well as genuine similarities, for policymakers at the federal level, as well as for the respective state governments.

A STRUCTURAL MODEL OF THE RELATIONSHIPS OF FOOD INSUFFICIENCY TO DISEASE RISK AND OUTCOMES AMONG ADULTS FROM NHANES III, *Carol Lawson Connell and Kathy Yadrick, The University of Southern Mississippi; L. Joseph Su, Louisiana State University Medical Center*

Research throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s clarified our understanding of food insecurity and hunger as managed processes in industrialized nations. As a result, Campbell proposed a conceptual model for the relationship of food insecurity to nutrition status and the consequences of a poor nutritional state. This theoretical model included latent constructs of "Risk for poor diet/secondary malnutrition," "Diet," "Nutritional Status," and "Consequences of a Poor Nutritional State." Each latent construct consisted of observed variables. Since that time research, using primarily multivariate and logistic regression procedures, has shown support for the relationship between food insecurity and each single latent construct proposed by Campbell but has not demonstrated inter-relationships among all model components. The goal of this research is to test a comprehensive theoretical model, derived from Campbell's original model and the current food security literature, for relationships among food security/sufficiency, dietary quality, disease risks and health outcomes among adults participating in the third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. Data analysis will involve the use of a comprehensive statistical approach known as structural equation modeling that allows testing of hypotheses about relationships among numerous observed and latent variables. The results of this research will help policymakers set priorities for food and nutrition assistance programs, as well as health care initiatives.

FOOD STAMP DYNAMICS ACROSS RURAL AND URBAN LANDSCAPES IN THE ERA OF WELFARE REFORM, *Domenico Parisi and Duane A. Gill, Mississippi State University*

The overall objectives of the project are: (1) to access how individual and community characteristics impact the dynamics of exit from food assistance programs across Mississippi's rural-urban l. dscape since the passage of the 1996 Welfare Reform Act; and (2) to assess the use of food assistance programs across racial groups, controlling for community characteristics. A theoretical model is developed to integrate individual, place, and geographic characteristics that influence food stamp dynamics of exit. Empirically, the proposed research will estimate multilevel event history models of food stamp dynamics to test the relative importance of place characteristics across different geographic settings. We will use a multilevel data methodology that links individual-level data to place-level

data. This involves the use of individual-level food stamp panel administrative data and community-level data generated from the 1990 Census data, Monthly Labor Statistics, and key informant questionnaires that are linked through the use of Geographic Information System technology. The data will help to answer the question as to whether food stamp dynamics of exit vary across rural and urban landscapes.

A COUNTY-LEVEL ANALYSIS OF FOOD STAMP CASELOAD CHANGES IN TENNESSEE, *Fisseha Tegegne, Tennessee State University, CARP*

The Food Stamp Program (FSP) is a safety net program that has been funded by the Federal Government and administered jointly with States. In recent years, there has been a decline in Food Stamp caseloads although the decline has not been as high as for the cash assistance program, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). There is some evidence of growing demand for nonprofit food assistance and variations in employment opportunities between urban and rural locations. There is also concern that there may be eligible people who are not participating in the FSP. The goal of this project is to conduct a county level analysis if the FSP in Tennessee that would consider local economic conditions, characteristics of food stamp recipients and policy choices made by the state. Administrative data on food stamp caseloads, employment, unemployment, labor force, and characteristics of recipients such as age, race, gender and education will be analyzed for all 95 counties of the state. Descriptive and econometric methods will be used to analyze the data based on urban-rural taxonomy. Results of the project are expected to provide useful input for decision-makers at county and state level.

MEASURING FOOD INSECURITY AND HUNGER AND ITS EFFECT ON HEALTH AMONG PARTICIPANTS IN THE EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION PROGRAM IN TENNESSEE, *Betty Greer, University of Tennessee*

Healthful diets are essential for optimal growth, productivity, well-being, and a reduction in the risk for certain chronic diseases. In keeping with the national commitment to increase self-reliance of low income individuals, it is important to assist food insecure individuals to manage their food budgets economically and effectively to ensure the welfare of the entire family. Healthy nutrition and consumer education can assist food insecure individuals in acquiring the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors needed to stretch limited food dollars, practice healthful dietary habits, and in the process, save on medical costs and improve their quality of life. Researching trends of food insecurity in programs such as the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) will provide useful information that will assist in refining programs and thereby reducing food insecurity for families.

Research and evaluation on the prevalence of food insecurity and hunger are crucial for: understanding the determinants and consequences of food insecurity; developing and evaluating effective methods to address the underlying causes and symptoms; and ensuring accuracy in measuring the extent of these issues. Research projects are needed at the state and community level to lead in local efforts to combat food insecurity.

EFNEP, an educational program of the University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service, conducts nutrition programs for low-income families with children throughout the state. This program teaches adults and youth how to make healthy food choices and how to manage their resources. Single females head several of these low-income families. This group is especially vulnerable to risks of food insecurity and the consequences resulting when children and adults do not receive a nutritionally adequate diet. Monitoring the food security status of these families will provide valuable information for nutrition educators and policymakers as they seek to shape future programs and policies.

Educational Workshops and Conferences

ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING CONFERENCE. The SRDC, along with Tennessee State University, responded to a request for proposals from the Appalachian Regional Commission for a four-state regional conference, involving Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee, to showcase innovative and high quality entrepreneurship education and training programs and to discuss strategies for promoting entrepreneurship activities. To plan a conference with broad-based input, the SRDC assembled a planning committee with representatives from the four states. The committee played a major role in organizing the content of the conference. The SRDC provided leadership in the design and the mailing out of a "call for presentations" brochure, preparation and distribution of the final conference agenda, the logistics associated with putting on the conference, and the printing of materials distributed to participants who attended the November 18-19, 1999, conference in Birmingham, AL. Over 130 people representing nine states attended the conference.

Southern Region Community Development Institute sparks enthusiasm among participants.

"I wanted to let you know how much our faculty appreciated the recent program that was conducted at the SRDC. They all came back with tremendous enthusiasm, and we have set economic development as our number one priority for the state of Louisiana. It is our intention to fully develop an economic development unit comprised of specialists presently working full-time in this area, plus four to seven full-time agents. In the future we will be calling on the SRDC faculty for guidance as we make progress toward this program goal.

The SRDC has been a tremendous support to the Extension Directors and Extension faculty throughout the Southern region. Whatever means it takes to continue this effort, we pledge our continued support."

-J.B., Louisiana State University
Cooperative Extension Service

MID-SOUTH DELTA INITIATIVES. The Center continued to conduct rural development educational outreach programs in the Mississippi Delta with a two-day Coahoma County Community and Economic Development Summit held in Tunica, MS, April 4-6, 2000. Center staff recruited six individuals from Mississippi State University to discuss economic trends in the Mississippi Delta and facilitated small group discussion on strategies for empowering local citizens to take an active part in the economic development strategies of their rural communities.

The Center is a member of the Mid-South Delta Consortium and participates in the Consortium's efforts to support the 54 counties of the Delta.

The SRDC is presently completing final plans for a second workshop involving five counties in the Northwest Delta region of Mississippi. The conference, to be held October 26-27, 2000, in Tunica, is titled Strengthening Our Community: Building Our Future. The workshop will focus on such topics as business retention and expansion, workforce preparation, home-based and micro business development, tourism development, youth entrepreneurship, and youth engagement in local community improvement activities. Local leaders and interested citizens from the five-county area will take part in this important workshop.

SOUTHERN REGION ACCOUNTABILITY CONFERENCE. The SRDC staff supported the efforts of the Family Consumer Science Leaders and the Program and Staff Development Leaders in the Southern region to conduct a conference that focused on addressing the issues of family resource management and health. The conference, that was held in Dallas in April 2000, lead to increased multi-state programming regarding family resource management and health issues. More than 90 people representing 16 states participated in the conference.

SOUTHERN REGION COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE. Drawing upon the expertise of faculty from across the region, the SRDC planned, organized, and sponsored its third Southern Region Community Development Institute, June 12-16 in Canton, MS. The Institute was targeted to the diverse group of Extension educators in the South who carry out work in agriculture/natural resources, family and consumer sciences, 4-H youth development, community development, and/or middle management. Twenty-four people from eight states attended, and seven students received college credit. Ten faculty members, as well as the SRDC director, conducted the training sessions.

which were designed to build a stronger conceptual foundation and strengthen the skills of Extension personnel in carrying out community development programming.

SOUTHERN PROGRAM LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE CONFERENCE. The Center, along with the Southern Region Program Leadership Committee (SRPLC), organized the 2000 meeting of the Joint Southern Region Program Committee held August 27-30 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The conference focused on topics which included increasing communication among Extension program leaders, developing a common understanding among program leaders in the South, improving Extension programs through sharing ideas and resources, and identifying new issues of importance to the South and implications for current and future programs. Over 200 people representing 15 states participated in the conference.

SOUTHERN EXTENSION HEALTH INSTITUTE. The SRDC, with support from SERA-IEG 19, has organized the first-ever Health Institute that is designed to provide Extension agents with comprehensive training on state-of-the-art health issues in the South. Included will be information about community health systems and the role of Extension in the community health arena. Specifically, tools and strategies for working with individual, family and community health issues will be offered. The Institute is scheduled for October 2-6, 2000, in Canton, MS.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: BUILDING QUALITY COMMUNITIES. The Center, with the active engagement of a multi-disciplinary team drawn from six states and USDA/CSREES, designed a conference to enhance the capacity of Extension to incorporate a systems approach to sustainable development as it affects individuals, consumers, families, communities, farms and forests. Scheduled for October 10-12, 2000, in Nashville, TN, the conference will focus on six themes: creating community, protecting natural resources, undertaking smart growth, developing a sustainable economy, governing in a sustainable manner, and creating a sustainable home environment.

EXAMINING THE RURAL/URBAN INTERFACE: A FOCUS ON YOUTH ISSUES. The SRDC has joined in partnership with the Heartland Center in sponsoring a multi-state dialogue on youth issues of concern to people living in urban and rural areas of the South. Three Southern states are being targeted for this special initiative – Alabama, Florida and Georgia. The SRDC is working with land-grant institution faculty in the identification of 10 individuals per state (five from rural areas and five from urban localities) who have expertise and/or interest in youth issues and who could participate in a special workshop. The workshop will provide a forum for rural and urban participants to discuss common issues of concern regarding the well-being of youth. In order to offer participants solid information on priority youth issues, the SRDC/Heartland Center have contracted with national scholars who will be preparing three special reports for use during the course of the workshop. These individuals are Ronald Mullis (Florida State University), Anthony LaGreca (University of Florida), and Daniel Perkins (Pennsylvania State University). The workshop is scheduled for November 2000.

SOUTHERN RURAL LABOR FORCE CONFERENCE. The SRDC is serving in a partnership role with the U.S. Department of Labor in organizing a regional conference that will seek to promote sound workforce and economic development activities among the South's rural communities. The conference, scheduled for December 2000, will include efforts to enhance the work of the workforce investment boards, and to engage local partners (such as county Extension educators) in contributing to the work of these local boards.

NATIONAL 4-H COUNCIL/SRDC YOUTH WORKFORCE PREPARATION INITIATIVE. The SRDC joined forces with the National 4-H Council in securing funding from the UPS Foundation to strengthen workforce preparation efforts target to youth in the South. The SRDC organized a planning meeting in July 2000 involving Extension youth and community development specialists in the region. The National 4-H Council, the SRDC, and the planning committee are working on a youth workforce preparation symposium to be held in Gulfport, MS, in February 2001. The conference will showcase innovative youth workforce preparation efforts that can be adapted for use by Extension specialists in the South who have an interest in workforce preparation educational programming.

SOUTHERN REGION MIDDLE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE. Based on support from the Extension Directors and 1890 Administrators and as part of the Center's commitment to the Regional PLC activities, SRDC staff were involved in planning the Southern Region Middle Managers Meeting to be held in April 2001.

FIGURE 1: EDUCATION CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS ATTENDANCE BY STATE OCTOBER 1999 – SEPTEMBER 2000

Conference	AL	AR	FL	GA	KY	LA	MS	NC	OK	PR	SC	TN	TX	VA	VI	Others	Totals
Southern Extension Health Institute-October 1999	5				2		5	5	1			2				1	21
Entrepreneurial Education & Training Conference-November 1999	76			10			19	1				17		1		6	130
Regional E-Commerce-April 2000	1		1	1		2	5	1	2			4		1		1	19
Southern Region Accountability Conference-April 2000	10	12	2	6	2	5	9	7	1	2	1	17	12	4		1	91
Southern Extension Health Institute-April 2000	2	1					4	2	1			1					11
Southern Region Community Development Institute-June 2000	5	1	1	2	2	6	11	2	2		1	2	1			1	37
Southern Region Middle Management Conference April 2000	5	10	3	6	15	25	21	12	2		10	6	8	4		1	128
National E-Commerce-July 2000				1		2	2									16	21
Southern Program Leadership Conference-August 2000	18	12	19	11	20	10	17	23	10	8	16	10	18	9		16	216
State Totals	122	36	26	37	41	50	93	53	19	10	28	59	39	19	0	43	675

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Rural Development Curricula, Publications, and News Releases

SOUTHERN PERSPECTIVES. This quarterly newsletter features a theme of regional interest in each issue. The newsletter is distributed to nearly 3,400 individuals in hard copy and to more than 300 electronically. The newsletter is also made available on the SRDC website in both pdf and html formats. Newsletter themes published during the past year included:

SPECIAL SRDC 25TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE, Volume 4, Number 1, *Winter 2000*
Offered a historical retrospective of the work of the Center during its 25-year history and outlined strategies for future Center projects and efforts.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH ISSUES IN THE SOUTH, Volume 4, Number 2, *Spring 2000*
Provided information about timely research and outreach education activities being undertaken at regional and national levels to improve the quality of life for children and youth.

E-BUSINESS ISSUES FOR THE SOUTHERN REGION, Volume 4, Number 3, *Summer 2000*
Addressed the definition of "e-business" and examined the opportunities and challenges being linked to e-business. This included a discussion of the important research and Extension activities that land-grant faculty could spearhead on this topic.

***Southern Perspectives* sparks interest in e-business.**

"I have asked for an additional 35 copies of the latest *Southern Perspectives* on E-Business. It is simply terrific! The articles and resources inside are great. It's like the SRDC was reading my mind for a printed resource on this issue. I will be sending the copies to the LeadAR class for their use. Hopefully, the information will stimulate their thinking like it has mine and encourage them to promote the use of this technology in their community. Thank you and bravo for the publication."

-J.W., University of Arkansas Extension Service

INFORMATION BRIEFS. Through its Information Brief series, the SRDC (in partnership with land-grant institutions in the region), has sought to shed light on the host of challenges and opportunities that face governments, communities and people as a result of "welfare reform" legislation. As part of this series, the SRDC published a report in November 1999 titled, *Child Care Issues Impacting Welfare Reform in the Rural South*. The document was made available in both pdf and html formats. A total of 2,400 copies of the brief were distributed to state land-grant contact persons in the South, state leaders, policymakers and other interested individuals. Partial support for the Information Brief publication series was provided by the Farm Foundation.

CA$HING IN ON BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES: A GUIDE TO BUILDING A HOME-BASED AND MICRO BUSINESS PROGRAM. The SRDC staff, working in collaboration with the National Home-Based and Micro Business Design Team, updated the 22-chapter curriculum first published in 1998. The newly revised second edition became available in January 2000. Nearly 550 copies of the initial edition of the curriculum have been distributed nationwide. An important feature of the second edition of this curriculum is that it is now available for purchase on CD-ROM.

COMMUNITY CHOICES PUBLIC POLICY EDUCATION CURRICULUM. A seven-module curriculum designed to engage communities in a systematic assessment of the linkages between human resource attributes and economic development opportunities has been undertaken by the SRDC. Titled *Community Choices*, the curriculum discusses the public policy education model, examines economic development strategies relevant to rural areas, offers a process for examining the human capital resources of your community, explores the role that migration plays in effecting the human capital resources of a community, and outlines the important role that families play in promoting the human capital development of children. Four modules were completed over the past fiscal year and are available on the SRDC website. The final three modules will be available in late Fall 2000.

COMMUNITY ASSET MAPPING: BUILDING ON LOCAL RESOURCES. Many rural communities feel overwhelmed by the many challenges which they face. But, too often communities have not uncovered the host of resources that local people, institutions and organizations can bring to bear in addressing local issues. The SRDC director prepared a series of resources for use by Extension educators in carrying a mapping of local resources. This includes the preparation of a manual on how to carry out a mapping of local assets and an accompanying PowerPoint document, a questionnaire that can help uncover the skills and talents of local people, a document for assessing community-relevant resources of local institutions, a guide for identifying emerging leaders in the community, and an instrument for determining the type of group skills that individuals possess that can be important in promoting the effectiveness of group meetings.

The SRDC director presented the community asset materials at various workshops over the past year, including the national workforce development conference held in September 2000, in Denver, CO, a statewide workforce preparation workshop held September 2000, at Pennsylvania State University, and the Southern Community Development Institute held in June 2000, in Canton, MS.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES IMPACTING THE SOUTH. The Center published the final two (of five reports) that were intended to address current and emerging rural issues of concern to State Rural Development Councils, land-grant institutions and other rural development entities located in the South. These reports were designed to provide state-of-the-art research information on the rural development topics being addressed. The two reports published during the fiscal year were:

Great Expectations: From Welfare to Work in the South. Author: Deborah M. Tootle, Louisiana State University. (Released December 1999).

The Telecommunications Act of 1996: Its Implementation in the U.S. South. Authors: John C. Allen and Erin L. V. Koffler, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. (Released January 2000).

THE RURAL SOUTH: PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY. In an effort to more effectively articulate the opportunities and challenges to the South's rural areas in this new century, the SRDC has initiated this important new series. The SRDC, the Economic Research Service, the Farm Foundation, the TVA Rural Studies Program at the University of Kentucky and the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Directors are providing financial support for the policy series. Thirteen policy briefs have been published since January 2000. They are:

A focus on the 21st century: New SRDC policy series on the rural South, Lionel J. Beaulieu, Southern Rural Development Center, No. 1, January 2000

T*he rural South: From shadows to sunshine*, William F. Winter, Watkins, Ludlam, Winter, and Stennis, No. 2, January 2000

The South's rural community colleges in the new millennium, Stuart A. Rosenfeld, Regional Technology Strategies, Inc., No. 3, February 2000

A*griculture in transition: Food and fiber livelihoods in an industrialized context*, Joseph J. Molnar and Annette Bitto, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, Auburn University, No. 4, March 2000

Agriculture in transition: Sustainable agriculture in the rural South, Jeffrey L. Jordan, No. 5, University of Georgia, March 2000.

The increasing diversity of the rural South: Challenges and opportunities in future population growth, Steve H. Murdock, Md. Nazrul Hoque, Beverly Pecotte, and Steve White, No. 6, Texas A&M University, April 2000

Water quality and quantity issues for the South, George F. Smith, University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service, No. 7, May 2000

Who loses? What happens when a community loses its health care infrastructure?, Gerald A. Doeksen, Oklahoma State University, No. 8, May 2000

Small and part-time farmers in the Southern region, John M. O'Sullivan, North Carolina A&T State University, No. 9, June 2000

Diversifying the rural economy: Tourism development, Mike Woods, Oklahoma State University, No. 10, June 2000

Promoting upward mobility for the working poor, Michael Rupured, University of Georgia, No. 11, July 2000

Emerging Latino communities: A new challenge for the rural South, Cruz C. Torres, Texas A&M University, No. 12, August 2000

Land use at the edge: The challenges of urban growth for the South, Lorraine Garkovich, University of Kentucky, No. 13, August 2000

SOUTHERN RURAL SOCIOLOGY JOURNAL ON RURAL LABOR MARKET ISSUES IN THE SOUTH. The SRDC director, along with the director of the TVA Rural Studies Program at the University of Kentucky, organized a series of 15 articles that will appear in a special issue of the Southern Rural Sociology journal. Over the past year, the SRDC/TVA Rural Studies directors provided leadership to the peer evaluation of all manuscripts and provided feedback to all authors regarding needed changes in their documents. Revisions have been completed of all articles and the publication of the special issues is in its final stages.

NEWS RELEASES ABOUT CENTER ACTIVITIES AND LAND-GRANT RESEARCH. In conjunction with the Office of Agricultural Communications at Mississippi State University, the SRDC has sought to increase publicity regarding the work of the SRDC and the region's land-grant faculty. In concert with Offices of Agricultural Communications (OAC) located at land-grant institutions in the South, the SRDC released six stories to news media across the South during the year. Several of these stories were subsequently published in a variety of newspapers across the region. They were:

"Number, Type of Future Jobs Will Affect Rural South," October 1999
As the 21st Century approaches, the workforce in the rural South will be polarized by high-paying, secure jobs that require high levels of education and low-paying, part-time positions that require little or no training.

"Land Prices Affect South's Agriculture," December 1999
The increasing value of land makes it financially harder than ever for farmers trying to survive bad crop years or farmers trying to get into business.

"Community Colleges Change with Society," February 2000
In a time when everything appears to be changing, community colleges in the South have undergone a transformation to become key players in economic development.

"Changing Agriculture Affects South's Look," April 2000
Sociologists see a disappearing middle in many areas of American life, and agriculture is no exception.

"Changing Diversity Brings Changes to the Rural South," June 2000
The South leads the rest of the country in overall population growth and racial diversity.

"Working Poor Face Struggle to Survive," August 2000
Welfare reform has lowered the numbers on welfare, but just because many of these people have found a job doesn't mean their troubles are over.

Extramural Funding

Research		
Economic Research Service		$200,000
Food Assistance		
University of Arkansas–Pine Bluff		7,500
Mississippi State University		12,500
Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (SAAESD)		10,000
	Total	230,000
Extension		
CSREES–Your Health System		7,500
Farm Foundation		10,358
25th Anniversary		
Millennium Series		
SRIEG 10 Proceedings		
SEPAC Proceedings		
Heartland Center		24,000
Extension Directors		26,000
1890 Extension Administrators		7,000
OCRE (Organizations Concerned about Rural Education)		2,486
Mississippi State University		12,500
	Total	89,844
Other		
Pegasus Satellite		15,000
AmSouth Bank		5,000
Travel Reimbursements		2,848
Joint Center for Poverty Research, Ohio State University, North Carolina State University, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, National 4-H Council		
	Total	22,848
TOTAL EXTRAMURAL FUNDS		**$342,692**

SRDC Partners

The following represents the host of organizations the SRDC has worked closely with over the past year:

- Administration for Children and Families/HHS
- AmSouth Bank
- Appalachian Regional Commission
- Community Development Society
- Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service/USDA
- Corporation for Enterprise Development
- Delta State University
- Economic Research Service/USDA
- Emory University
- Farm Foundation
- Foundation for the Mid-South
- Heartland Center
- MDC, Inc.
- Mid-South Delta Consortium
- Mid-South Center for Rural Community Colleges
- Millsaps College
- Mississippi Department of Human Services
- National 4-H Council
- National Association of Counties (NACo)
- National Association of Towns and Townships
- National Rural Development Partnership
- Nonprofit Resources, Inc.
- Offices of Rural Health (Mississippi and Oklahoma)
- Organizations Concerned About Rural Education (OCRE)
- Pegasus Communications
- Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI)
- Small Business Administration
- Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Directors
  Southern Regional Forester
- Southern Growth Policies Board
- Southern Legislative Conference
- State Rural Development Councils (Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas)
- TVA Rural Studies Center, University of Kentucky
- University of Alabama
- U.S. Department of Commerce
- U.S. Department of Labor
- University of Southern Mississippi
- W. K. Kellogg Foundation

FIGURE 2: SRDC ACTIVITIES AND THE PRIORITY AREAS* TO WHICH THEY RELATE OCTOBER 1999 – SEPTEMBER 2000

Activity	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5
Access to Opportunities		✗	✗	✗	✗
Addressing the Food Assistance Needs of the South's Vulnerable Populations		✗			✗
Business Retention & Expansion	✗	✗			
Ca$hing in on Business Opportunities		✗	✗		
Community Asset Mapping	✗				
Community Choices Public Policy Education Curriculum	✗				
ECOP-Program Leadership Committee	✗				
Entrepreneurial Education and Training Conference	✗	✗			
Examining the Rural/ Urban Interface		✗			
Families First Evaluation Project	✗	✗			
Grant Connections	✗				
Information Briefs	✗				✗
Mid-South Delta Initiatives		✗	✗	✗	
National 4-H Council/ SRDC Youth Workforce Preparation Initiative		✗	✗		
National & Regional E-Commerce Task Forces	✗	✗		✗	
National Childcare Initiative	✗			✗	
National Network for Health	✗			✗	
National Workforce Development Initiative	✗	✗	✗		
News Releases About the Center Activities and Land-Grant Research.	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Promoting Physical Improvements of the South's Rural School System				✗	
Rural Development Issues Impacting the South	✗			✗	

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Activity	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5
Rural Welfare-to-Work in MS		X	X		X
S-296 Rural Labor Markets: Workers, Firms, and Communities in Transition		X	X		
S-298 Assessing Impacts of Welfare Reform on Individual, Family, and Community Well-being in the Rural South.		X	X		
Southern Extension & Research Activity, Information Exchange Group-Rural Infrastructure				X	
Southern Extension & Research Activity, Information Exchange Group-Rural Health				X	
Southern Extension Health Institute	X				
Southern Perspectives	X	X	X	X	
Southern Region Accountability Conference	X				
Southern Region Community Development Institute	X				
Southern Region Extension Water Quality Conference	X	X			
Southern Region Middle Management Conference	X				
Southern Region Program Leaders Committee	X				
Southern Rural Development Consortium	X				
Southern Rural Labor Force Conference		X	X		
Southern Rural Sociology Journal on Rural Labor Market Issues in the South		X	X		
Sustainable Development: Building Quality Communities	X				
SRDC Website Expansion	X				
The Rural South: Preparing for the Challenges of the 21st Century	X	X	X	X	X

***PRIORITY AREAS**

Priority 1: Strengthen and support the capacity of Southern land-grant institutions and their partners to conduct rural development research and outreach education programming.

Priority 2: Enhance the economic, environmental, and social well-being of rural communities and people.

Priority 3: Strengthen the human capital resources of the regions rural communities.

Priority 4: Improve rural Southerner's access to vital community services.

Priority 5: Enhance the capacity of rural people and communities to carry out their expanded responsibilities in the design, management, and financing of government programs.

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Presentations

The SRDC director and staff were involved in the formal presentations at the following conferences or meetings:

- "Regional Rural Development Centers Update," National ECOP Program Leadership Committee Meetings, New Orleans, LA, January 19-21, 2000, and Seattle, WA, September 18-19, 2000
- "The Rural South: Still a Shadow in the Sunbelt?," Agricultural Outlook Form 2000, Washington, DC, February 24, 2000
- "Southern Rural Development Center Update," Association of Southern Region Extension Directors, Tulsa, OK, April 11-12, 2000.
- "Rural Community Development and Land-Grant Institutions: Challenges and Opportunities," Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, April 18, 2000
- "Rural Development and Southern Land-Grant Institutions: Challenges and Opportunities," 12th Biennial Research Symposium, 1890 Land-Grant Universities Association of Research Directors, Inc., Washington, DC, April 21, 2000
- "Intensive Case Studies II Papers—Discussant Response," Rural Dimensions of Welfare Reform Research Conference, Washington, DC, May 4-5, 2000
- "Education and Workforce Issues in the Rural South," Texas Legislature Select Committee on Rural Development," Corpus Christi, TX, May 18, 2000
- "The Human Capital Challenges Facing Mississippi's Communities," Mississippi Agriculture Summit III, Jackson, MS, June 7, 2000
- "The Human Capital Challenges Facing the Rural South: The Polarization of Tomorrow's Workforce," National Association of Council Agricultural Agents, Jackson, MS, August 8, 2000
- "Rural Development Issues in Rural America: The Perspective of the Regional Rural Development Center Directors," Rural Sociological Society, Washington, DC, August 14, 2000
- "Southern Rural Development Center Update," Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors, Norfolk, VA , August 15, 2000
- "Multi-State Programming," Southern Region Program Committee Meeting, San Juan, PR, August 29, 2000
- "Uncovering Local Assets: The Foundation for Building Stronger Communities," Pennsylvania State University, September 5-6, 2000
- "Uncovering Local Assets: The Foundation for Building Stronger Communities," Building Workforce Assets for Quality Communities Conference, Denver, CO, September 12-14, 2000

Participation

The SRDC director and staff participated in the following conferences or meetings:

- SERA-IEG 19 Health and Safety Workshop, Nashville, TN, October 11-13, 1999
- ERS Food Assistance Research Small Grants Program Initiative, Washington, DC, October 14-15, 1999
- Entrepreneurial Education and Training Workshop, Birmingham, AL, November 18-19, 1999
- Center Directors and Staff Meeting, New Orleans, LA, November 22-23, 1999
- Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists, Lexington, KY, January 29-February 1, 2000
- NCA-13 Rural Sociology Administrators Meeting, Washington DC, February 23-24, 2000
- National Rural Development Partnership Meeting, Washington DC, March 5-8, 2000
- National Child Care Initiative Team Meeting, Raleigh, NC, March 15-16, 2000
- Mid-South Delta Consortium, Little Rock, AR, April 2-4, 2000
- Regional E-Commerce Meeting, Birmingham, AL, April 6-7, 2000
- Southern Region Accountability Conference, Atlanta, GA, April 10-12, 2000
- Federal Reserve Bank Meeting, Kansas City, MO, April 27-28, 2000
- Mississippi Delta Beyond 2000, Washington, DC, May 10-11, 2000
- National E-Commerce Meeting, Memphis, TN, July 18-19, 2000
- ESCOP Social Sciences Subcommittee Meeting, Washington, DC, September 14-15, 2000

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MISSION

The SRDC serves as a proactive leader and primary facilitator of rural development research, education and policy dialogue that will improve the socioeconomic conditions of the Southern region.

The SRDC fosters innovative and creative approaches to sustainable rural development and serves as a key player in building collaborative networks that reach across agencies, institutions and communities.

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